

Former Huskers (By Ron Douglas)

Bob Lohrberg, played 1950-51-54 (Catcher)

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Bob had a very successful teaching/coaching career in Houston, and at Lincoln Southeast, where he also served as Athletic Director. He held Administrative positions at Auburn, Sidney, and Wayne State College. Bob is basically retired but does some consulting work for the Nebraska State Legislature and is active with the Nebraska Semi-Pro Baseball Organization where he played for many years.

Bob was thrilled to be a young member (many were WWII Veterans) of the 1950 Big 8 Champs, led by the legendary Bob Cerv, and also played in 1951 and 1954. He very much enjoyed the experience even though the staff and facilities were limited in comparison to today.

He feels today's staff is very strong and the facilities are terrific.

Kelly John Combs, played 1979-80 (SS, 3B)

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Kelly is currently the owner of a Real Estate Development Company that specializes in Medical Office Buildings. He truly believes that God sent him to Nebraska as a transfer from UCLA, where he met and married his current wife of 30 years, Diana Schleiger Combs, an Omaha native. They have two children, one married (24) and one, a junior at Boston University (20). He has fond memories of his teammates and of assistant coaches Ron Johnette and Dave Underwood. He reflected that most Nebraskans are “wonderful wonderful people”.

Kelly has just joined the Home Run Club to keep up with the current Husker program.

A little research indicates that Kelly was presented with the C.S. BOUCHER AWARD honoring the senior athletic letterman in a major sport with the highest four year cumulative grade point average. Editors note: WOW!
His two most memorable games were: knocking in the winning run against eventual National Champion, USC, and playing against his brother, Kevan, a pitcher for Cal Poly Pomona.

Charlie Colon played 1987-90 (C,P)

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Lincoln, Ne.

402-306-5000

Charlie has worked at Gallup since 1991, coached baseball at NWU for seven years, and received his MBA in 2005. He has been married to Dawn for 15 years and has a daughter, McKynzie (9) and Cooperstown (6). Yes, Cooperstown is correct!

Charlie considers it an honor to have been a Husker (once a Husker always a Husker) and cherishes his life long friendships, the game memories, the road trips, and the red/white scrimmages. He would "do it all over again in a minute"! He feels Coach Anderson is doing an outstanding job with the program by "instilling pride and passion with each player that puts on a Husker uniform". Charlie was a PHILLIPS 66 CLASSROOM CHAMPION, and was twice Academic All Big 8. Editors note: NICE!

Larry “Jake” Bornschlegl played 1962-65 (Catcher)

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Jake is now retired after 35 years in teaching/coaching/administration. He was inducted in 1985 into the Nebraska Semi Pro Baseball Hall of Fame.

Jake considered it a great experience playing for the Huskers under Coach Sharpe. He enjoyed the bus trips, the games, but mostly “the experience of playing a timeless game with wonderful teammates and friends”.

He was twice voted MVP by his teammates in '64 and '65. Editor’s note: I was there when, in his first at bat as a Husker, he rattled the roof of a house beyond the left field fence at Tulsa, for a homer.

Jake’s biggest thrill was sweeping Mizzou in '65, and his biggest disappointment was losing the Big 8 Title by a half game in the season’s final game, a loss to Kansas.

He is excited about Husker baseball and especially likes the concept of recruiting Nebraska and the surrounding states as a first priority.

Tom Ernst played 1961-62-63 (P,SS)

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Tom has been married to his wife, Nancy, for 45 years and has 3 children and 8 grandchildren. He currently is Business Development Officer for Union Bank and Trust.

He was a very versatile player excelling on the mound and at shortstop. Tom also was on the Husker football team for a spell, and handled some kick off chores. He relished the competition on the field and enjoyed the fun we all had off the field.

Tom predicted that the hitting would be a little better in 2009 for the Huskers, but felt that the pitching might be a little thin. He expected improvement before season's end.

Editor's note: Tom recently received the honor of being elected to the Nebraska High School Athletic Association Hall of Fame.

Dirkes Rolston played 1953, 54, 55 (SS, 2B)

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Dirkes is retired now after a long career in Physical Therapy. He has “fantastic memories” of the guys he played with. He specifically mentioned legendary trainer, George Sullivan, who motivated him to his career in P.T.

He is pleased to see today’s successes, and the huge crowds that attend the Huskers’ “wonderful new stadium”. Dirkes reflected that there were rarely 100 people watching Husker games back in his day.

Roger Hill played 1980-82 (OF)

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After his career with the Huskers, Roger played 6 years of professional baseball and coached 2 years professionally. He is proud to have received his B.S. in Computer Science. He has three children, Roger, Jr., Paige, and Aaron.

Roger credited a good experience at Nebraska for preparing him well during his professional career. He gives credit to his family for supporting him in all endeavors of his life. Mentioned were his parents; Stephen and Doreatha, and his brothers; Steve, Kenneth, A.J., Jeff, and their respective families.

Roger felt a special redemption when the Huskers beat Long Beach State in Las Vegas. LBS had cut him in his first year of college.

Charlie Wright played 1951, 52, 53, 54 (RHP)

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Charlie practiced law in Lincoln until his retirement in 1997. He claims current status as an “unpublished author”. Editor’s note: Aren’t we all, Charlie? He enjoyed the entire Husker baseball experience including the practices, the games, the bus road trips and his teammates. He stated that they all knew most of the other players in the then, Big 7, and played semi-pro ball with and against them in the summer.

Charlie believes the season is much too long for the student athlete. He notes that all phases of the game have changed dramatically over the past 55 years and observes that the players are “much taller and heavier” today. He relished attending the reunions of the 70’s, 80’s, and 90’s.

Charlie passes over his own accomplishments, and rates Dick Geier’s perfect game against Kansas in 1954 as the most special victory during his career.

Editor’s note: Nice touch, Charlie. You sound like a “team player” to me.

Bruce Cramer played 1969, 70, 71, 72 (P,Utl)

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Bruce, a Senior V.P. at Mutual of Omaha in Commercial Banking has been married to his wife, Mary, for 36 years. Mary, PHD, is the Dept. Chair at UNMC College of Nursing. He has three children; Dr. Jonathan Cramer, M.D., (wife Kati and two daughters); Thomas Cramer, Construction Engineer; and Michelle Cramer, Special Education Teacher.

He has run in 6 marathons and received an MBA in 1977.

Bruce was a four year Husker letterman as a pitcher, infielder, outfielder, and pinch hitter. He received 3 high school letters each in football, basketball, track, or baseball in all four classes, A, B, C, D.

During his sophomore year, 1970, he was 4-1 with a 1.20 ERA garnering two relief wins during a Friday doubleheader in a sweep against Oklahoma State.

Editor's note: Bruce, if you're not a candidate for Mr. Husker Versatility, I don't know who is!

Darnell Clarke played 1979-81 (2B)

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Darnell was the Project Manager for the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta. He currently is Director of IT Strategic Planning for the State of Georgia.

Darnell's home town was Detroit, and he designates his Husker career as the "greatest experience of my life". His personal career highlights include going 5 for 5 in the Big 8 Tournament and sweeping Oklahoma State in their home park.

Steve Oakley, played 1978, 79, and 80 (OF)

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Steve has been an executive in application software and human resource technologies most of his career. He has been married for 30 years to Diana Derebeew, a local California UCLA grad who watched Steve play in his final season in Las Vegas at the UNLV Desert Classic, and at the UC Riverside Invitational Tournament in Southern California. Steve and Diana have three boys (25, 23, and 20); two have graduated from The University of San Diego, and the youngest is a junior at USC, studying International Relations.

Steve was the Husker Co-Captain in 1980 and also a second team Academic All American that year. One of Steve's best memories is hitting two doubles and three RBI's beating defending national champions USC 6-3 at Dedeaux Field on March 22, 1979, and then flying to Hawaii that evening to take on fastball king Derek Tatsuno and The University of Hawaii Rainbows at Aloha Stadium in Honolulu for a rematch after beating Tatsuno 2-1 in 1978.

It is obvious by the current roster and alumni that Nebraska always recruits quality talent and character. Steve is proud to have represented University of Nebraska athletics, and has fond memories on and off the field at UNL.

DICK GEIER, P, 1954-55-56

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Currently, Dick resides in Lincoln with his wife, Rae, of 53 years. His four children and seven grandchildren all reside in Lincoln, too. Dick has enjoyed his season tickets since the opening of Haymarket, attends almost every home game with Rae, and occasionally will take a Home Run Club bus trip to an away series.

Dick treasures his Husker baseball experiences of yore and feels that although the program was “pristine” compared with today’s, it was still state of the art when compared with other northern schools.

The Big 7 schedule was only 12 games, two games per year with the other six conference teams alternating on a home and home basis. The other games were played with non-conference teams during Easter Vacation or during mid-week for a total of 24 games scheduled per year. Rainouts were rescheduled as a doubleheader the next day or not made up if weather won the day.

The Huskers always finished high in the conference during those years but never made it to the CWS. Many players of that era were two sport athletes, including the great Bob Cerv, first Husker All-American and American League All-Star, Tom “Trainwreck” Novak, Bobby Reynolds, Ray Novak, Norm Coufal, Willie Greenlaw, Fred Seger, Don Erway, Bill Giles, Dirks Ralston, and Jim Cederdal. Also playing in 1955-56 was the slick fielding hard hitting third sacker, All-American, Donnie Brown.

There was very little recruiting done in those days and the few scholarships available were divided up among many players. Enrollment at the University was 8,000 at the time, and there were always more players trying out than positions available.

Dick says pitchers were expected to go the distance with every start, and of course, there were no radar guns or pitch counts. Nobody seemed to have a sore arm under those conditions and weight training was banned for all baseball players. Hmm? Certain pitches have different names today, but Dick thinks the ball movements are pretty much the same.

There was more practicing than playing in those days and the players seemed to enjoy that and got along well. The road trips were a special treat, according to Dick, and he admits they contributed greatly to his “educational experience”.

The crafty lefty pitched one of the most remarkable games in Husker history during his sophomore year against Kansas. He had a 27 batter no hitter against Kansas, only a technicality from a perfect game. One runner reached first base on a passed ball after striking out, but then was picked off before another pitch was thrown.

Dick, A Home Run Club member, is proud to be associated with Husker Baseball considering the status of the program today, a level which no one could have imagined in 1954.

STEVE GEWECKE, P.

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Steve played for the Huskers in 1987, and then transferred to USC where he pitched in two Regionals and was credited with a win against Washington State. Subsequently, he played two years of minor league Class A ball.

He currently teaches and is head coach for Alhambra High School in southern California.

His highlights with the Huskers included pitching seven innings against powerhouse Wichita State and leaving with the lead in a game they eventually did not win.

Steve enjoyed his Husker experiences immensely citing top notch people, training table facilities, and academic services. He felt "The Buck" was certainly a fine field for the time, but that Haymarket Park is "out of this world".

He is very glad that the program has reached such a lofty national status, and felt it always had that potential but just never quite got over the hump until recently.